

State of the City Address



Mayor Eric Hogue

March 25, 2014

Introduction

Today it is my honor, privilege and duty to deliver, the annual State of the City address for Wylie, Texas.

First, I want to confirm that The State of our City is sound.

As we begin our 127th year as a community, I want you to stop and reflect with me about our great city...what is it that makes Wylie...Wylie?

What is it about the nearly 39 square miles of our city limits that make the Wylie Difference?

We should take pride in our city and in the success it has seen over the past year.

A special thanks for Wylie Fire Rescue Color Guard for the presentation of the colors and for Police Chaplain Dan Rainey for leading our invocation.

As I begin, I would like to introduce our City Council members:

Mayor pro tem and Place 5, Rick White

- Has lived in Wylie for 18 years.
- Has served on our city council for nearly 9 years.
- He is the owner of 911 iMedia, which collects and sells property damage information in real time.

Councilman Keith Stephens, Place 1

- Has lived in Wylie for over 23 years.
- He is in his 1st year on the City Council.
- After retiring from Verizon, he recently began his own business here in Wylie.

Councilman Nathan Scott, Place 2

- Has lived in Wylie since 2007.
- He is in the second year of his first term in office.
- He is a Financial planner/adviser, for Longhorn Wealth Management

Councilman Todd Wintters, Place 3

- Has lived in Wylie for 14 years.
- He is also in his 1st year on the City Council.
- He is the owner of Engineering Concepts and Design, here in Wylie.

Councilman Bennie Jones, Place 4

- Has lived in Wylie for nearly 11 years.
- Has served on the City Council for 5 years.
- He is in the middle of a career change and attending the Police Academy at Eastfield College.

Councilwoman Diane Culver, Place 6

- Moved to Wylie in 2003.
- She is in her third year on the City Council.
- Diane works for FM Global which holds 35% of the commercial property insurance market in the world.

Our City Manager, Mindy Manson

- Has worked for Wylie for over 18 years.
- She has been our City Manager since 2006.
- Mindy is our longest tenured City Manager in Wylie's 127 year history.

Our Assistant City Manager, Jeff Butters

- Has worked for Wylie since 1998.
- He started out as our chief of police.
- He became our Asst. City Manager in 2006.

Today, I could stand here and give you a bunch of statistics about our city...

Like the 82,000 visits that were made to the Fitness Floor of the Wylie Recreation Center...or the...

17,500 guests who used the indoor track...or the...

70,000 guests who enjoyed using the gym floor...or the...

Fact that we have nearly 35,000 library card holders...or that...

Our Finance Department received the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for the 24th year in a row.

All of these are very impressive things...but unless you have been living under a rock you know this...or at least you should.

We have an outstanding City Staff, who works hard every day to make Wylie a better place for you.

But Wylie is more than just a bunch of statistics.

Recently, a reporter was asking me about our city and how we are dealing with some issues in town.

I explained to him that one tragedy does not define our community. I went on to tell him how Wylie is a unique city. That while we may be a part of the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex, and a suburb of Dallas, we don't see ourselves as that.

We are different...we still see ourselves as a city all our own. *Maybe that is because you have to want to get to Wylie...there are no freeways or toll ways that will bring you here.*

SCHOOLS

*Maybe it's different because...*we have our own school district with over 14,000 students. We have over 1,800 employees who work in the district, and many of them make Wylie their home.

BUSINESS

*Maybe it's different because...*when a new business comes into our community; we rally around them and make them feel like Wylie is their new home.

In 2013 The Wylie Medical Plaza opened with the Lake Point Medical Center Emergency Room Facilities, and tripled their projected numbers.

B&B Theaters, the 17th largest movie chain in America, opened in Wylie last year with much fanfare. Sales of the Wylie 12 location are 20% ahead of their projections. And best of all...they love Wylie!

It's places like, Savage Precision Fabrication who builds hundreds of parts for the F-35 Lightning II Fighter Jet for our military. This jet is a family of single-seat, single-engine, and fifth-generation multirole fighters under development to perform ground attack, reconnaissance, and air defense missions with stealth capability. It was great to be there for the unveiling of the F35, with members of our federal, state and county governments, as well as Lockheed Martin, and all the employees of Savage. Thanks to the work being performed by these individuals, Wylie is doing our part in protecting our country!

Sanden International is more than just a big building at the corner of FM 544 and Sanden Boulevard. Recently I had the opportunity to tour the new 20 million dollar piston line with the President of Sanden. Did you know they are the

largest independent manufacturer of automotive air conditioning compressors in the world. Sanden produces 2.5 million compressors per year in the Wylie production facility. If your car has an air conditioner, chances are it might have been built right here in Wylie, Texas!

It's Bayco Products, the manufacturers of industrial and personal lighting products distributed nationally to Wal Mart, Home Depot, Lowes and many other retail stores across the country.

Maybe it's different because we have new shopping options for our citizens like Kroger Marketplace and soon we'll be adding T.J. Maxx Home Goods store to that list.

Maybe it's different because after eight months of negotiations, we have secured The Rock, Wood Fired Pizza restaurant to open in front of Kroger Marketplace in the Fall of 2014.

Or because we were willing to work with Collin County and the City of Sachse to commit up to \$2.4 million dollars for the extension of the FM 1378-Woodbridge Parkway. Coming this fall, Woodbridge Parkway will open up traffic for our commercial developments like B&B Theatre and Woodbridge Centre in addition to creating much more convenient access to Draper Intermediate, Cooper Junior High and Wylie High School.

Or...maybe it's really different, because even though we have these great new big businesses...we haven't forgotten the home grown businesses who are Wylie's backbone...Taste of Home, All Pest Solutions, Wylie Insurance, Shoemaker and Hardt, Corbin Law, Lutz Woodworks, Downtown Salon, Ballard Street Café, Wylie Flower and Gift Shop, and the list could go on and on.

LIBRARY

Maybe it's different because over 498,576 items were checked out of our public library. As one parent expressed, "The reading club organized by the Rita and Truett Smith Public Library has been an immense opportunity for my daughter to connect the book and the picture it was based on. Many thanks to those who conceived this idea, following it through and kindling the reading spirit in each child who is attending this program."

We also like to be the first to do some things...like how we are the first library to offer a special needs story time for Special Needs students. The Wylie Difference is shown in how we look-out for ALL our citizens.

SENIOR CENTER

Maybe it's different because we realize that we're all getting older.

On January 1, 2011, the first of the Baby Boomers began to turn 65 years old.

Every day for the next 19 years, about 10,000 more will cross that threshold. By 2030, when all Baby Boomers will have turned 65, nearly 20% of our nation's population will be at least that age.

In other words, we're all getting older.

For years cities have focused on parks and recreation; specifically baseball, soccer and football fields for our young families. While it is important that Wylie continues to support our 1,600 young soccer association members, our 1,200 little league players and our 500 pee-wee football stars; we also need to be looking ahead and planning for that segment of our population...our Baby Boomers and their growing needs in our community.

While there is no doubt that these Baby Boomers will be at the local ball fields watching and supporting their grandchildren, they also need a place that they can call their own. On October 12, 2013, the city of Wylie made a step in providing such a place with the opening and dedication of our Wylie Senior Recreation Center.

Over the years, we have had individuals and families who have moved in and made Wylie, Texas their home and their place of business. The list of names of the citizens who have left an imprint in our city could be endless. While they helped build Wylie to what it is today, it is our responsibility to provide our seniors a place that they can call their own. This senior facility is our opportunity to hold them up and let them know how much they mean to our community.

In 2011, Wylie City Council voted to allow the former library building, located at 800 Thomas Street, to be reserved for transformation into a senior center. City funds were not available for the necessary renovations. Groups stepped forward to help Wylie make this dream a success. One group in particular was formed, the Wylie Advocates for Senior Activities (WASA), for the sole purpose of raising funds to outfit and remodel the old building.

Local businesses also stepped up and helped provide the work and support to make this dream a reality. Special thanks to Pulliam Construction, Lutz Woodworks, Wild Bunch Painting and Willaby Electric for going above and beyond in helping us to open the doors.

Also a special thanks to WASA (or as I call them, "friends of our senior citizens") for the fundraisers they hosted and the 'never quit attitude' they had in securing a permanent home for our seniors.

Today, Wylie has a home for our senior citizens. Has it made a difference? We've seen a 30% increase in people participating in scheduled daily programs during 2013. The Wylie Senior Recreation Center is open every day of the week with many activities, luncheons, day trips, exercise room and a place where you find a good game of dominos!

FIRE DEPARTMENT

Maybe it's different because we continue to grow city services to meet the need of a growing population.

Two new fire trucks were purchased for 1.6 million dollars to replace aging equipment. These units provide more capabilities for our firefighters to help those in need, and it helps in their safety as they serve our community. Were these two new trucks needed? Well they replaced units that were 14 and 18 years old...so yeah, they were long overdue!

Maintaining the ISO 1 rating was another difference in Wylie which recognized the efforts of Wylie Fire & Rescue, our Dispatchers, the Water Department, and the Building Department.

Wylie became the 130th agency nationwide (7th in the State of Texas) to be accepted as a partner with The Missing Kids Readiness Project. This program promotes best practices for responding to calls of missing, abducted and sexually exploited children.

The Difference: beginning with our 9-1-1 Telecommunicators, Wylie does its best to take care of its own, especially those children that represent our future.

But if you want a prime example of how we are different...consider this story.

This involves a medical call where the patient had fallen off of a ladder while hanging Christmas lights. The patient's leg was injured and he was transported to the emergency room. For many fire departments, that would be the end of a successful story...but not for Wylie. The firefighters not only provided care, but some stayed behind and completed the job of hanging the Christmas lights for this gentleman and his family. Now that is the Wylie Difference.

There is no denying that the last few weeks in Wylie have been a little challenging.

Some of the comments I have heard have been frustrating, from the television stations and from some of the local town chatter...

Let's look at the facts...and see the difference.

Over 30 years ago we had an ax murderer in this town. The Wylie Police Department made an arrest of the guilty party within 24 hours.

A few years ago an innocent little boy was left in a park, with no identification. The Wylie Police Department solved that crime in eight days.

Two years ago, a teenage young man lost his life in the middle of the night...that next morning Wylie PD was banging on the door of the guilty parties house.

Two weeks ago, another young man lost his life and our police department...especially officers like Donna Valdapena, who has had to answer questions in front of cameras, microphones and multiple reporters, should be commended for representing our community in a professional dedicated and committed way.

Our hearts hurt with these families while we rally around them, cry with them, support them, and hold them up through this very difficult time...BUT...

The terrible actions of a few, do not define who we are. It's our actions after such events and how we come together as a community...as a family...as WYLIE...that is what makes us different...that is the true WYLIE WAY.

Here are the facts...

Consider this. I just named 4 bad things that have happened over a 30 year period in Wylie, Texas. 4 things that made the evening news...that's all...4...how many towns can say that?

Here is why that is the case. This past year there was a 12% drop in the crime rate. That's after a reduction of 15% in 2012.

We were recognized again by the State of Texas for our National Night Out event.

We have established a full-time Crime Prevention Officer position to liaison with Neighborhood Watch groups and neighborhood associations.

We've added a Special Investigative Unit, known as the Narcotics Unit, that has made great headway in identifying, targeting, and apprehending individuals involved in narcotics distribution and other offenses that are often tied to drug use.

We have continued in our strong and committed partnership with the Wylie School District providing Police Officers on our school campuses.

For the past three years our Police Department has conducted the Wylie Youth Enrichment Program with five of our police officers determined to impact and shape the hearts and minds of nine kids over a two week period. This program focuses on Wylie youth that are at-risk or are beginning to travel down a troubled path. With the guidance of the Wylie Police Department, local businesses, guest speakers and targeted field trips, the program promotes positive self-esteem, respect of self and others, community volunteerism, as well as awareness of the issues related to tobacco, drug and alcohol use, and teen pregnancy.

The program was developed to give kids and their parents a perspective on how their actions impact others, and how the choices that they make today will impact their lives and the lives of the people around them.

The kids tour a children's home who are dealing with the consequences of the poor decisions their parents made. They meet with a former gang member to hear firsthand about his life choices and subsequent struggles. A tour of the County Juvenile Jail provides a glimpse of what could lie ahead for them if wrong choices are made. Other team building activities include retirement center visits, volunteerism in projects that benefit the community, job interview training, and one of the kid's favorite sessions--a formal meal at Taste of Home to learn proper etiquette.

Fifteen year old Wylie High School Student Madysen was initially hesitant to attend the program but by the end of the two weeks she began to understand the impact her attitude and choices had on herself and others, "I learned what it meant to be a leader and a mentor to the younger kids...it was cool that they looked up to me and I could help them."

"We realized early on that the best way to ensure that the participants get the most out of the program was for them to experience things first-hand and to hear directly from people who were dealing with the consequences of their decisions, rather than receiving a lecture from us," said Officer and Coordinator, Angie McIntosh.

The commitment to the students does not end after two weeks. School Resource Officers keep in touch with the kids throughout the school year having one-on-one meetings.

Our goal with this program is to help our youth realize their potential and stop listening to that negative voice in their head or life that tells them they are not worth it, or that they can't do something.

Our officers want to help these kids understand their own potential and watch as they work hard to grow into that potential over the next several years.

This is just one example of how we are continuing to grow our Public Safety Department. Not because of problems we have today or 30 years ago. We are growing it to insure we don't have problems tomorrow. We are looking ahead, we are planning for the future. We want to insure Wylie stays unique, stays different.

Never doubt, you live in one of the safest cities in the United States of America.

So the next time you hear someone being negative about Wylie...set them straight!

Many of us have a daily routine. We get up in the mornings, get the kids ready for school, and head off to the office for a day full of work. We come home at night with visits to the local grocery stores, restaurants, take the kids to one of the community parks for a ball game, and go to bed thinking about our hectic plans for the next day...just a typical day that Wylie offers to all of our citizens.

Then there are the public events like last year's Bluegrass on Ballard. Thousands of families can gather and enjoy a fun and entertaining evening in downtown Wylie.

It's wonderful that Wylie, Texas, is able to offer all of these wonderful things for our citizens. And it is great to be the Mayor of such a wonderful community.

Many of us chose to live in Wylie for the hometown feeling, or because of the wonderful school district. But I believe there is much more to Wylie than just schools, parks, stores and festivals....it's the Wylie Difference that keeps us here...that makes us unique.

Unfortunately bad things do happen from time to time.

BUT don't let the choices of one or two people make you forget all of the GREAT things that happen on a daily basis in this city.

Wylie is the place that you can call home...

(Tell Story About Mother)

The State of our city is sound...our future is bright...and in Wylie...we are wide awake and looking forward...

This place is our home...it's our Wylie...and that is the Wylie Difference...

May God continue to bless each of you and the great City we call Wylie, Texas as we move forward...thank you.